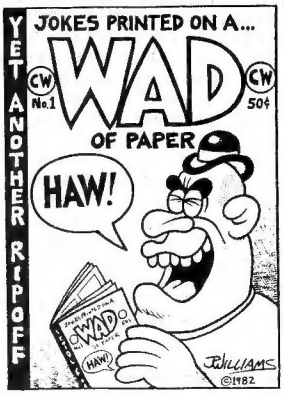

(50¢/STAMP FROM CW)

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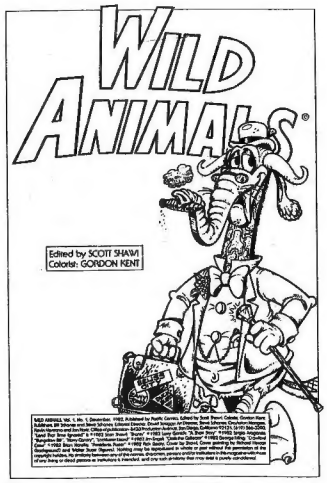
COMIX WORLD 209. November 15, 1982. © Clay Geerdes Box 7081, Berkeley, CA 94707. All Rights Reserved Logos by George Kochell (His LONE WULF 1 is $1--5432 Main #4, E. Petersburg, PA 17520), Roldo, & Dave Patterson.* Scott Shaw's WILD ANIMALS and Tim Fuller's HARDBOILED ANIMAL COMICS now at your local dealer. Last Gasp has Kim Deitch's adaptation of EATING RAOUL. TALES OF JERRY 2 out by Jane Oliver.* New CW minis include STONER MAN 7, LOW GRADE 7 (Dale Oliver), BABYFAT 29, WAD, a mini MAD parody by Jim Williams, TAINT by Kev Eastman, & coming up in a week, BAD GIRL ART 3. C.G.

NEWAVE COMIX are now in the MINNESOTA DAILY, the student newspaper of the University of Minnesota. I'm drawing superhero endorsements for a local worker-owned veggie restaurant featuring CYNICALMAN. In exchange, I get free food and a great deal of control in the content of the ads.

At MICROCON (Oct 2-5, '82), I was on an underground panel with Bill Fugate, Reed Waller, Denis Kitchen, and Cat Yronwode. There wasn't a whole lot of good news for underground fans this fall. Kitchen said the only books of his making money were THE SPIRIT and GAY COMICS (though Waller's OMAHA has sold out the first printing so I assume that made money, too). He doubts that another issue of DOPE or BIZARRE SEX will ever come out. He laid the blame on the new anti-paraphenalia laws that are closing head shops and on the changing attitudes of young people. Teenagers are apparently more straight today than they used to be. Yronwode pointed out the growing market in direct sales shops and said that anything printed in color could automatically sell 10,000 copies. I expect that if undergrounds are going to survive they will have to move in on the direct shops and appeal to fans and collectors which means printing in color and emphasizing stars like Crumb, Shelton, and Griffy. Course, this means they will no longer be undergrounds. They'll be products in a marketplace just like SPIDERMAN and ROM, existing at the whim of the consumer and not an alternative for artists seeking self-expression like they were meant to be. Participating in this panel drove home to me how true it is to think of minicomix as the New Wave of Underground comix. Self-publishing is the only way to achieve artistic freedom and newave minicomix are the cheapest, easiest and most impressive way to publish your material. So far, in the America of 1982, they are IMPOSSIBLE to commercialise, so they are the last refuge of artistic freedom in comix.

-MATT FEAZELL 10/16



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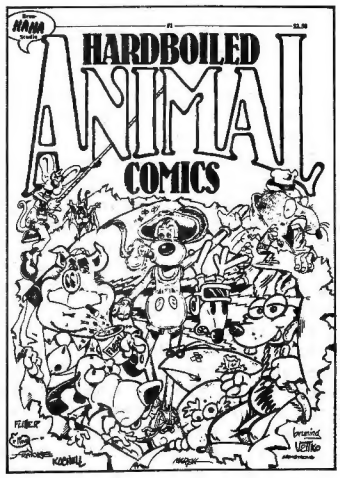

CLARK DISSMEYER AT THE MINNESOTA CON... "They had an underground panel; much better than the one they supposedly had at the last con which was just Billy Fugate, Reed Waller, and Denis Kitchen sitting at tables outside the Dealers' Room being ignored by everybody. This con they had the ug panel in the regular program room. Actually, it wasn't so much an underground panel as a Kitchen Sink panel: Billy Fugate, Cat Yronwode, Denis Kitchen, Reed Waller and Matt Feazell. I missed the first few minutes of the panel because me and Jeff (an employee of Comic City) and another guy were riding up and down the elevator, stopping at every one of the 18 floors, dropping pennies down the shaft, etc. Anyway, before the panel, Billy tried a couple of times to convince one of the organizers of the con to put me on the panel. Like Billy said, 'you belong on that panel more than I do. You've published all those books. Nobody here knows who I am.' But, well, I'm not in the established ugs like Billy or Matt so no go. It was a great panel, well, not great, but I had fun. I could have just as well been on the panel, the only difference would have been I wouldn't have had to raise my hand so often. Denis Kitchen no longer wants to be known as an ug publisher. Calling a book an ug is the 'kiss of death.' He's published Engel and Fiala's FANDOM CONFIDENTIAL and is doing all those SPIRIT things. All well and good, but when I see SPIDER-MAN, HULK, et al on the corner of a Kitchen Sink book (FANDOM CONFIDENTIAL), I know the end is near. BIZARRE SEX 10 will probably be the end of that title and DOPE COMIX 5 will probably be the last issue of that title. Head shops want to get away from the seedy image of a place where one goes to buy dope under the counter, so they're leery of a blatantly titled book like DOPE COMIX. I think it was Billy who said, 'Why don't you change the name to Paraphenalia Comics?' I think 5 years down the line we'll see Kitchen Sink catering to the comics fan audience with Eisner's SPIRITS, and doing GAY COMIX for the gay specialty outlets. Kitchen Sink is actually carrying Mike Grell's STARSLAYER comic! Well, Denis knows how to survive as a publisher, catering to reliable specialized audiences. That's okay. He'll still be publishing a few good things. GAY COMIX is a great comic. OMAHA, too, and he can let the more successful books subsidize the books he knows won't do too well. We've heard all this before.

The panel was held at 7 in the regular program room so we had a fair audience--maybe 10-15 people.

Denis Kitchen introduced Matt Feazell as Clark Dissmeyer for reasons nobody knows.

I met C. C. Beck. He's an okay guy. Gave him a copy of ACTION ARCHITECT and he was gonna pay for it. But instead I took a copy of FCA/SOB and gave him a quarter. Fanboys are such cretins! One guy had Beck sign a copy of SPIDER-MAN! What goes on in their minds, you wonder. All those little kids would ask him to do drawings for them and he wouldn't, but finally he relented and drew some kid a picture of Snoopy! All the kids were talking about how mean he was, what a dummy, etc. The fanboys there, the kids, are the biggest fucking leeches! They hit everybody up for drawings. Matt ends up doing lots of CYNICALMAN, ANTI-SOCIALMAN, STUPIDBOY, etc.

A whole new spate of mini comics have come out of Alamagordo, New Mexico in the past few months--4 issues of TOMATO MAN, and 5 issues of MISTER MOUTH by John Mobbs II and Patrick Donahue, respectively, with another guy doing a third comic, CAPTAIN GRAVITY--these are extremely crude and very funny and very exciting. There's a newave superhero renaissance, FIGHTIN' GUYS, CYNICALMAN, THE STUMP, BIZARRE ESCAPADES, INSIPID SIX, TOMATO MAN, etc., very bizarre reworkings of old cliches.

-CLARK DISSMEYER

Several critics of the KENNEDY PRICE GUIDE have expressed their disapproval that "just about anyone" could scribble anything on a piece of paper, fold it and staple it, send it to Kennedy, and be listed as an artist in the GUIDE. They don't like this. Why not? Obviously, they are arguing for the artist as elitist, as someone special to be separated from, segregated from, the rest of the tribe, to be worshipped from afar, his artwork collected, the magazines it appeared in inflated to ridiculous proportions for the profit of everyone but the artist. Is this position valid? Sure, but so are other positions. I would argue that the artist should not be separated from the tribe, that he should rather be one of the tribe, and that all the members of the tribe should draw, dance, sing, and practice all of the possible art forms. I am always happy when a new artist gets in touch with me via COMIX WORLD and wants to contribute to the little mags. I don't sit back and say,'now is this rascal out to get himself famous by contributing to my mag so he will be listed as an artist in some future revision of the KENNEDY GUIDE?' Granted, now that the GUIDE exists, this becomes a possible motive, but I would doubt that it will amount to much. I still believe that those who feel the need to express themselves in art reach out to others like themselves. Of course, they want attention and praise for what they do--we all want that whether we paint cars or build model airplanes, but that is not the primary artistic motive which prevails over a long period of time. I can't speak for others, but my main pleasure in cartooning comes from making other people laugh. Art, to me, is a social form. It connects me with other people, mainly those who enjoy the form the way I do. None of us who do the newaves at COMIX WORLD have pretentions of fame and glory, of being "discovered" by some flack at Marvel and offered a lot of money for hacking out superhero pages the rest of our lives. We do comix because it's fun and it's the way we communicate with each other. We certainly had no idea we were going to find our stuff listed by Kennedy or anyone else, since we were doing it long before hearing about the GUIDE. Personally, I'm pleased to see the newavers receive recognition in the GUIDE and I can't help but be curious about the motives of those who continue to put the newavers down instead of encouraging them. I know most of those who write about the newaves haven't read many of them. They are the elitists who automatically reject anything that isn't printed on vellum and distributed by the big companies--it's the form of newave that bothers them. How can any nice art appear in such a simple form? Well, blame that on the economy, but the point is newave is encouraging art, developing the potential for art in young people all over the country, encouraging a type of creativity which is non-establishment.

-CLAY GEERDES

". . . I certainly understand and support your approach to COMIX WAVE, even with the built-in restrictions of such a format. The fact that you recognize your abilities and your weaknesses is a lesson I wish others would learn. You do what you can do without the project turning into, as you call it, a 'pipe dream.' I think in a few years you will be able to look back and say that you published a number of artists that have gone on to much bigger arenas. Zabel, Miller, and one or two others are all doing work that is almost fullstride and that transcends being pigeonholed as underground. It really hurts that the label 'underground is so commercially destructive these days." -Anthony Smith

ON THE UG PRICE GUIDE: "My views on this guide are ambivalent, but in the end I think it's a good move. Some other comix people I've talked with here in the Pacific Northwest have much the same reaction, initial rejection and then coming around to accept it. My own opinions are colored by different facets and interests.

As a long retired comix collector (10 years), I am amazed at how far UGs have come in such a short time, not only because of the fact that they now warrant a price guide, but also because of the current activity surrounding them. Thanx to people like you, small-timers like me who love to cartoon but not seriously enough to get serious about it can still draw, self-publish, get a small audience from all over these here United States and have a whole lot of fun in the process. Back in the days when I used to collect, such a thing was unrealistic. Even in 1973, when I self-published my first comic, the UG network seemed to be locked up and centralized. But no more! The UG guide not only serves as a focal point for collectors, but also puts some of us who have always been outside the network on record (for whatever that is worth).

As a comix artist, the guide will be useful in helping me prevent the repetition of someone else's title. I think I unwittingly did this on at least one occasion. We always fool ourselves into thinking we are reinventing the wheel. However, I sometimes wonder about comix collectors. I'm not really in much of a position to say anything negative since they supplement my printing costs (I have yet to break even on any of my 11 comix.) but, before, in the days when I would print 100 copies of my comix and hand them out to friends or sell them in Puget Sound comix shops, my feedback was personal and general. My comix were sort of "community comix." Only a handful of my readers were actually collectors. There are advantages. They have insights and background knowledge that the man in the street does not. I appreciate their criticisms/acclamations very much. But they also have a commodity view of comics which sometimes can be annoying. I'll spill my guts on some cartoon, and someone will write to me and say "How many copies did you print? You used to be a collector, what do you have that I want?" In short, comix collectors are plugged into an esoteric world where ACQUIRING is the sport. This somehow grates against the spirit of the original underground comix as I remember them (yes I'm old enough to be of Viet Nam draft age.). This is the one aspect of the new price guide that I find not only ironic, but kind of disturbing. I must mention that Jay Kennedy himself has ordered my comix and given me very human feedback, among the collectors who have responded to the art and expression.

But, shit, who am I trying to fool? The 60s are over, the 70s passed like a bad fart and here we are in the 80s--already 1/4 over and look at the results. Feh! But looking toward the future, I see good things happening. The term "underground", which has always struck me as a misnomer anyway, is becoming all tangled up in competing terms. Jim Ryan and I have talked about this cosmically insightful bit of tripe through the U. S. Postal Service, and he introduced me to the most logical term for this apparent growth of geeks like me publishing their own work--"Alternative Comix". Good enough.

The decentralizing of the comix world is a good sign. Different directions, more places to pioneer. It won't last forever, because like all such creative movements, it will be gobbled up and co-opted into the maincreek. Who knows how long it will last. I knew Crumb's jig was up when I saw redneck loggers in my hometown with "Keep on Truckin'" stickers next to their gunracks and George Wallace stickers. That's how it gets diluted up here in the nowhere land where things aren't jivin' and jumpin' like they are in, say, Berkeley or New York. By the time this "underground" stuff hits the average work-a-day person it has been filtered through the greedhead culture definers. This Price Guide will help legitimize "underground" comix, and I'm not sure that is good. But on the other hand...

As I said, I feel ambivalent about this price guide business. My last view is as a professional, and it is a good one. Not as a professional cartoonist, because I'm not one. I'm a twisted geek living in a corner of the country drawing God-knows-what amid the volcanos. I always have and always will, regardless of what happens in the comix network. But I am a professional librarian. Honest to God! Certified and the works! As a bibliographic tool, I think Kennedy has put together a much needed source. In spite of all my doubts and concerns, the Price Guide triumphs as a good move.

100 years from now all of us will be dead. Cheerful thought, huh? How is some zit-faced kid in the year 2082 (Yes, I DO believe the human race will survive that long.) gonna get a foothold on the creative side of comix history without a central source that can be found in any library? By that time, Kennedy's Guide will be totally obsolete, but someone may build on it, just as he built on several sources before him, including your appendix to A HISTORY OF UNDERGROUND COMIX (as I understand the situation, which ain't sayin' much.).

In the end, maybe all this hubbub over the Price Guide is much ado about nothing. Even though comix people seem to be moving in different directions, the goal seems the same--namely, promotion of individual self-expression. Being an egotistical bastard myself, I'm all for that! Everything is already too Kraft cheese as it is. As young as it is, I think the whole Hierarchy of the underground comix world has reached bullshit proportions. It's time to tear it down and start anew. Get settled long enough and we become about as interesting as Durwood Kirby (remember him? That's how Old I am.). The 60s are dead, the 80s are ahead. Let's get this petty little bubble of comix collector crap outta the way and take a bite into LIFE! Life is more than a few pages of newsprint stapled together under some commercially successful slick color cover.

I firmly believe that the whole idea of individualised comix is a step toward the future. -STEVEN WILLIS 8/25/82